

a prerequisite to any agreement. This should have been our position from the start.

Additionally, the report describes violations of foreign travel restrictions of high-ranking Iranian Government officials. One particularly noteworthy violation is the case of Major General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Special Forces Quds Force. Earlier this year, General Soleimani met with the Secretary General of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Just last month, photographs surfaced of General Soleimani surrounded by Shiite militia fighters in Iraq's embattled Anbar Province.

I am disappointed to hear some try to minimize these Iranian violations of Security Council resolutions because some Iranian arms and personnel are currently being used against the heinous Islamic State. We must not turn a blind eye to Iranian malfeasance. We must not fall into the trap of accepting Iran's transgressions simply because they are fighting a common foe. In this case, the enemy of our enemy is not our friend. Some of the armed Shia groups fighting the Islamic State are the same groups that were killing U.S. troops just a few short years ago. They might very well try to do so again.

A nuclear-armed Iran would be a disaster for the region and the wider world—not only for our Israel allies but also for our Saudi, Egyptian, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Qatari, and Emirati allies as well. With the continuing turmoil in the region and the threat posed by the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist groups, the world cannot afford a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Considering the hand-in-hand history between Iran and Hezbollah, one could easily translate a nuclear Iran into a nuclear Hezbollah.

It is therefore highly distressing that Iran has, to quote the Security Council, "continued certain nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment and some work at Arak." If Iran has failed to sufficiently address even the core cause of the sanctions against them, what confidence do we have in them in moving forward?

It is particularly telling that the U.N. expert panel assessed that a decline in reports by member states of Iranian violations results from one of two factors: either Iran has decreased its prohibitive activities significantly or member states have refrained from reporting noncompliance so as not to interrupt the negotiations process. In light of the revelations contained in this report, the latter appears far more likely.

As the President continues to push for a permanent deal with Iran's leadership, this report is as alarming as it is timely. Past performance may not universally predict future behavior, but it certainly should be part of the consideration. Moreover, this report is far from the only sign of Iranian malfeasance. As recently as yesterday, the

Iranian Parliament voted to prohibit international inspections of military sites, casting into serious doubt its commitment to a workable nuclear deal.

Given these troubling moves, the President should explain to the American people what level of confidence he has negotiating with Iran given how it repeatedly violates the international community's mandates with impunity. The stakes are too high to act as if Iran were a trustworthy partner.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the Senate is not in a quorum call; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct, Senator.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak for a few minutes about the disaster that is known as ObamaCare and specifically the Supreme Court's upcoming decision in *King v. Burwell*, which we anticipate will be handed down later this week or perhaps as late as Monday. This case will decide whether the IRS can rewrite the law, and it actually challenges the legality of the subsidies to health care policies affecting people in up to 37 States.

If the Court rules against the IRS, that would be the third strike against ObamaCare in the Supreme Court. What more evidence would we possibly need of this administration's routine overreach of its authority under the Constitution?

Not surprisingly, the President once again has failed to accept responsibility for this flawed law that bears his name, and he has suggested that Congress could simply fix the problem with a one-sentence provision. In other words, even though President Obama and congressional Democrats jammed this partisan monstrosity through all by themselves in 2010, somehow, after three strikes in the U.S. Supreme Court, it is now our responsibility to clean up the mess.

But what is wrong with ObamaCare far exceeds the issue at hand in *King v. Burwell*. I hear of the disastrous effects of ObamaCare every day from folks back home in Texas. They know, as do I, that a one-sentence provision won't fix a 2,700-page legislative disaster, unless that sentence were to repeal ObamaCare in its entirety.

If somehow this administration and congressional Democrats could be sued for misleading consumers under the usual legal standards, the case brought by millions of Americans against ObamaCare would be a slam dunk. The President claimed his law would help everyone—miraculously decreasing costs, increasing access, and reducing the deficit—when, in fact, time after time after time, the opposite has been shown to be the case. What we have

seen instead has been great damage to the health care system in this country, leaving many Americans with their health care disrupted, their work hours cut, and higher costs for their health coverage.

Although proponents of the law, including the President and Democratic Members of Congress, claimed ObamaCare would reduce the financial burden of health care for American families, this has not been the case. In fact, one study found that ObamaCare actually increased individual market premiums by an average of almost 50 percent between 2013 and 2014. So rather than make health care more affordable, what ObamaCare did is to make it less affordable and more expensive by increasing individual market premiums by an average of almost 50 percent.

Recently, the administration released rate filings showing that insurers have requested double-digit premium increases for nearly 700 plans next year. So double-digit increases have been requested.

We can all remember the President's repeated promises that under ObamaCare those who wanted to keep their plans would be able to do so. In fact, the Associated Press has documented that more than 4.7 million Americans had insurance plans they liked that were canceled by ObamaCare.

And of course, just last week President Obama himself called the Web site platform for his trademark legislation—healthcare.gov—"a well-documented disaster."

The fact that this failed law has hurt patients is bad enough, but the truth is it is also hurting the economy and hurting jobs. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that ObamaCare is forcing employers to cut jobs and has projected that as many as 2 million jobs could be lost by 2017.

If the Court rules for *King*, the plaintiff in the lawsuit, millions more Americans could find their health care coverage temporarily disrupted—just one more painful consequence of this reckless piece of legislation.

Clearly, ObamaCare was not the silver bullet for our health care system or our economy. Instead, what we know today is that ObamaCare really just amounted to a trail of broken promises. But you will never find the President or those who foisted this flawed legislation upon the American people taking responsibility for it. Rather, as I said earlier, somehow they think it is for somebody else to clean up their mess.

I continue to believe the American people would be well served to see this entire law scrapped in favor of real patient-centered reforms that lower costs and increase access to care. I thought that was what health care reform was supposed to be about—lowering cost and improving access to care. But ObamaCare did the opposite.

I am here to say that while Republicans did not create this mess, we are

ready, willing, and able to do our best to protect the American people from any more harm caused by the President's flawed law. That is why we have been working hard for the last several months to provide the American people with a much needed off-ramp from ObamaCare, should the Court rule against the administration once again. But we really need to hit the reset button and start over again.

First and foremost, we are prepared to help the more than 6 million Americans, including nearly 1 million people in my home State of Texas, whose costs would suddenly skyrocket as yet another consequence of this disastrous piece of legislation. In doing so, we will empower the States to opt out of ObamaCare, allowing them the flexibility to more effectively lower costs and increase choices.

We will not promote command-and-control solutions emanating from here in Washington, under the philosophy that Washington knows best. We will promote market-based options without the threat of harmful, onerous, expensive mandates. Repealing these mandates will help the American people finally get the coverage they need at a price they can afford.

In short, we will do everything in our power to protect the people affected by this flawed piece of legislation, but we will not protect the President's failed law. It is time to scrap it and do better. It is my hope, if the Court rules against the administration once again, that Congress will find it within themselves to work together to protect the almost 1 million Texans and millions more Americans from yet another painful consequence of ObamaCare. I know Republicans stand ready to protect the American people from this failed law while providing a path forward for better health care for our country. That health care includes more freedom, more flexibility, and more choices.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I wish to take this opportunity to send my condolences to the families of those who were murdered in Charleston, SC, on Wednesday evening and to the entire city of Charleston.

It is hard to understand how someone could walk into a church, be welcomed into a prayer meeting, and then take out a gun and slaughter nine people who were in the process of discussing the Bible. That is hard to believe, but that is what happened.

In the last 60 years, this country has made significant progress in civil rights and in trying to become a less discriminatory society. Sixty years ago, parts of our country were part of an apartheid-type system, segregated housing, segregated schools, segregated restaurants, segregated transportation, segregated water fountains, and, in fact, an entirely segregated way of life. Perhaps most significantly, African Americans in a number of Southern States were denied the basic right to vote and were unable to participate in the democratic process.

Today, as a nation, we have a right to be proud of the significant changes that have taken place in our country over the last 60 years and the many advances that have been made in civil rights and in the creation of a less discriminatory society.

We should be proud that in 2008, this country surprised the world by overcoming our racist history and electing our first African-American President and then reelecting him 4 years later with a strong majority. You may like Barrack Obama, and I do, or you may dislike Barrack Obama, and many Americans have that view, but it is no small thing that this country was able to judge a candidate by his ideas and character and not the color of his skin. But clearly, while we have made significant progress, the events of last week remind us how far we yet have to go in order to create a nonracist society.

I am not the Governor of South Carolina, I am not in the South Carolina legislature, and I do not live in South Carolina, but I do believe the time is long overdue for the people of South Carolina to remove the Confederate flag from the statehouse grounds in Columbia. That flag is a relic of our Nation's stained racial history. It should come down. If any good can come of the terrible tragedy in Charleston, it is that the people of South Carolina now have the opportunity to finally turn a page on our past. Frankly, the Confederate flag does not belong on statehouse grounds, it belongs in a museum.

I wish to also express my deep concern about the growth of extremist groups in this country, groups that are motivated by hatred—by hatred of African Americans, by hatred of immigrants, by hatred of Jews, by hatred of Muslims, and anyone else who is not exactly like them. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, sadly, there are some 784 active hate groups in the United States and the number of those groups is growing. Let me express my agreement with NAACP President Cornell Williams Brooks that “we need vigorous prosecution and vigorous investigation of these hate groups and the resources to do so.” I call upon the FBI to do just that.

About 50 years ago, as a student at the University of Chicago, I was arrested in a civil rights demonstration to end segregated schools. I was also involved in helping to end segregated

housing in Chicago. It is clear to me that over that period of time this Nation has come a very long way, but it is also clear to me—and I think to the majority of our people—that we still have a long way to go.

I will conclude by reminding my fellow Americans about those great words that appeared in the Declaration of Independence, that moment in history when the Colonies broke off from the British: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men”—and we would add women—“are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” That is the dream of America, that is our vision, and that is a goal we must obtain. The tragedy in Charleston reminds us how far we yet have to go.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SALTS ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor today to speak about a major problem across my State—the Presiding Officer has seen it in Iowa—and across the country, and that is the scourge of synthetic drugs.

We have all seen reports of people who have hurt themselves or others or who have died under the influence of dangerous drugs. This issue hit home in my State after Trevor Robinson, a 19-year-old from Blaine, MN, died after overdosing on a drug called 2C-E in 2010. I introduced a bill to outlaw 2C-E and other similar substances, and with the help of Senator GRASSLEY, as well as Senator SCHUMER, we were able to get that bill signed into law. But there is so much more that needs to be done, as we have learned since we passed that bill.

Here is one recent example. Law enforcement officials in Florida and throughout the country are dealing with a synthetic drug called Flakka. This extremely dangerous drug has been linked to hallucinations and other bizarre behavior. We are always trying to stay one step ahead of these new and dangerous compounds because the way the law works now, we have to keep adding new compounds. So what happens is that the crooks who are manufacturing these drugs—the drug leaders, the people who are running these drug rings—are actually just changing the compounds up so they are different, and they are staying one step ahead of the law in that way.

Before I was elected to the Senate, I spent 8 years serving as chief prosecutor in Minnesota's largest county.